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Managua Said to Get Military Copters

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Recently stepped-up shipments from Warsaw Pact countries to Nicaragua include at least two Polish Mi2 helicopters that can be used as gunships, according to government officials with access to the latest intelligence reports.

The helicopters, which have the NATO code name of Hoplight, were landed at the Cuban port of Mariel, officials said, and then put aboard a Nicaraguan cargo ship. This continued the new pattern of Warsaw Pact countries taking their cargoes only as far as Cuba rather than sailing all the way to Nicaragua, officials said.

U.S. officials outlined the latest

spurt of shipments to Nicaragua as part of the administration's campaign on behalf of the counterrevolutionaries, or contras, who are fighting the Sandinista government there. The administration maintains that the Nicaraguan government is supplied and back by the Soviets and Soviet-backed countries and is attempting to export its Marxist revolution into the region.

U.S. surveillance of the shipments by the high-altitude Air Force SR71 Blackbird reconnaissance plane, and other means, have not detected any advanced fighter aircraft or other highly sophisticated weapons in the latest shipments to Nicaragua, the officials said. Cuban gunners trained an SA2 Guideline antiaircraft missile on a

U.S. reconnaissance plane two weeks ago but did not fire it, according to the Defense Department.

Outside of the Hoplight helicopters, the shipments over the last month have been mostly trucks, jeeps, uniforms and ammunition, according to government officials. They added that there is evidence that the volume of war goods going to Nicaragua will increase between now and the end of the year.

Nicaragua has received four Hoplights, one of which is equipped with launchers for air-to-ground rockets. The helicopters, which resemble the U.S. Army's UH1 Huey, can also be used to ferry small groups of soldiers to remote reaches of the country.